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# SASKATCHEWAN'S FUTURE IN HEALTH RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH RESEARCH FOUNDATION

## Strategic Plan | 2021

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# Introduction

Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) was established by an act of legislature in 2002. The mandate provided to SHRF by the Government of Saskatchewan is to:

- Seek and receive funding to support health research
- Encourage and facilitate health research
- Assist the Minister of Health in developing a provincial strategy
- Fund research according to the strategy
- Disseminate information about funded research

Saskatchewan's commitment to health research dates back to 1979, with the establishment of Saskatchewan Health Research Board (SHRB). The very first grants were made by SHRB in 1980 and a number of years later, a group funding competition led to the concept of developing a Health Services Utilization and Research Commission (HSURC) for the province. HSURC worked to promote the wellness of Saskatchewan people by supporting independent health research and by fostering the efficient and effective utilization of health services.

In early 2001, Ken Fyke authored a pivotal report titled *Caring for Medicare*. A key recommendation was to increase spending on health research in Saskatchewan to the equivalent of at least one percent of the health budget – about $45 million in today's environment. Later that year, the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care* promised an immediate $2 million addition to the existing $5 million annual research investment, with further increases to follow as resources permitted.

In 2003, these funds began to flow to the health research community through the establishment of SHRF. SHRF's new mandate was to organize, manage and allocate most of the province's health research funding – a much broader responsibility than both its predecessors. In addition, SHRF was tasked with sharing research knowledge with the public and health professionals, assisting the Minister of Health in developing and implementing a provincial health research strategy and seeking new sources of revenue to advance health research.

Today, Saskatchewan enjoys an unprecedented opportunity to capitalize on investments made in the infrastructure and environment needed for world-class health research. The Canadian Light Source, the Vaccines and Infectious Diseases Organization and Intervac (VIDO-Intervac), the Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation and its emphasis on nuclear medicine, all combine to provide exceptional vehicles for health research. Additionally, the Saskatchewan Population Health Research Unit (SPHERU) has established itself as a leader in cutting edge population health research, and the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (IPHRC) is building capacity for community-based Indigenous health research in the province.

Every vehicle needs fuel, and SHRF provides the funding necessary to fuel health research and innovation in Saskatchewan. SHRF's commitment to providing high quality, peer-reviewed processes for research that is responsive to provincial needs, its focus on accountability and impact, and its emphasis on partnerships and collaboration, enable Saskatchewan health researchers to place themselves among the world's best, allowing the province to be a global leader in creating and adopting new health innovations.

This strategic plan will outline a set of strategic initiatives that aim to capitalize on current strengths, address gaps and create powerful synergies, enabling SHRF to fulfill its vision of a vibrant culture of health research and innovation for a stronger Saskatchewan.

SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH RESEARCH FOUNDATION

# Commitment

## VISION

By 2021, SHRF will have led the establishment of a vibrant culture of health research and innovation for a stronger Saskatchewan.

## MISSION

SHRF leads strategic investments in high impact, peer-reviewed health research aligned with provincial needs; builds and broadens Saskatchewan's health research and innovation capacity; and facilitates the use of health research findings for informed decision-making at all levels, from the individual to care providers to policy-makers.

## VALUE PROPOSITION

SHRF's commitment to providing high quality, peer-reviewed processes for health research that is responsive to provincial needs, its focus on accountability and impact, and its emphasis on partnerships and collaboration, enable Saskatchewan health researchers to place themselves among the world's best, allowing the province to be a global leader in creating and adopting new health innovations.

## VALUES

**Excellence:** SHRF's activities and investments serve as the catalyst for excellence in health research and innovation.

**Collaboration:** SHRF's activities and investments facilitate the creation of partnerships among researchers, health care providers, patients and families, communities, not-for-profits and industry that support the creation and adoption of new knowledge and health innovations.

**Transparency and Accountability:** SHRF's decision-making and business processes are open and accessible. We provide unbiased, peer-reviewed processes; evaluate and measure the impact of the research we fund; and report publicly on developments in health research across the province.

**Efficiency and Effectiveness:** SHRF's lean organization allows it to be flexible and nimble in responding to the health research and innovation priorities of Saskatchewan, and to ensure that we meet the needs of our stakeholders and funders.

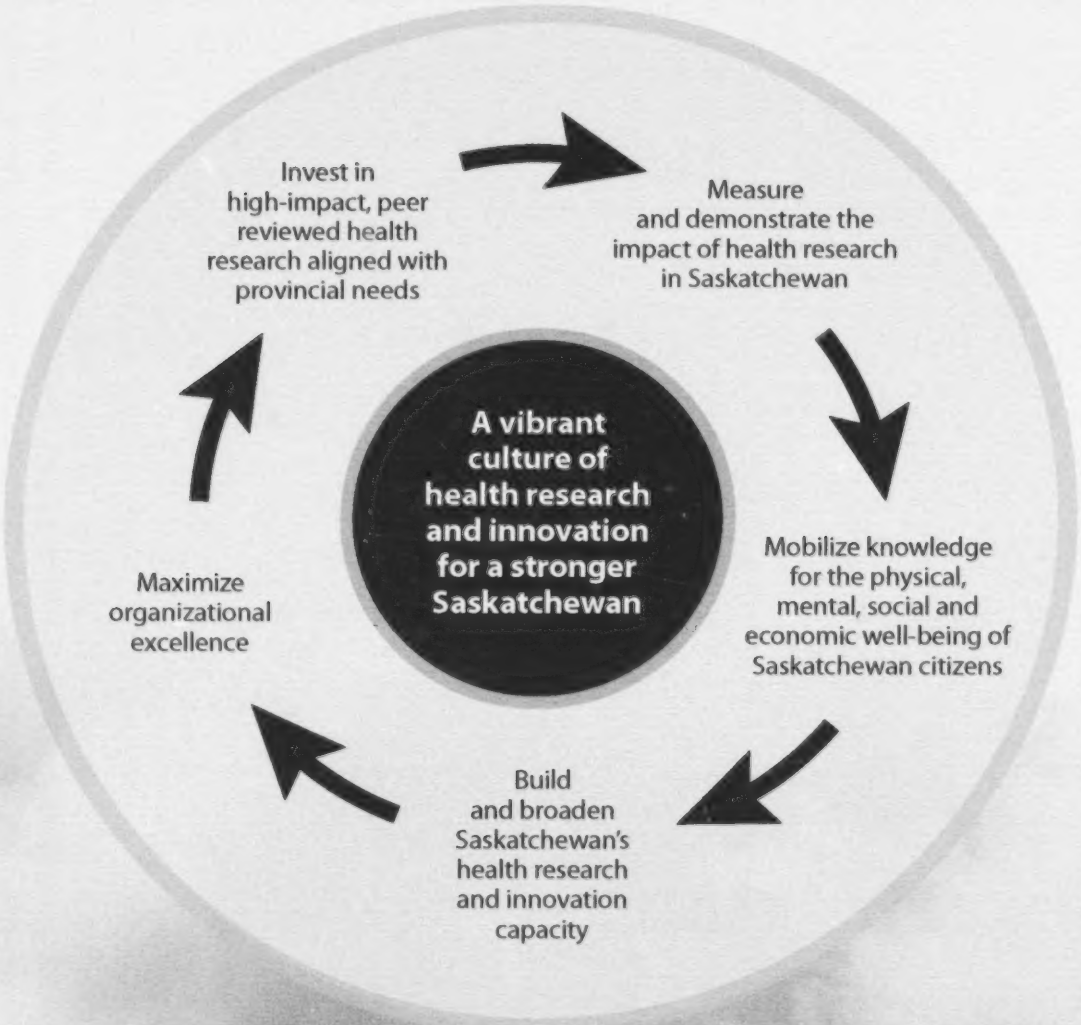
## FROM VISION TO IMPACT

SHRF will lead the establishment of a vibrant culture of health research and innovation for a stronger Saskatchewan by focusing its efforts on five strategic goals:

1. **Invest in high-impact, peer-reviewed health research aligned with provincial needs**
2. **Measure and demonstrate the impact of health research in Saskatchewan**
3. **Mobilize knowledge for the physical, mental, social and economic well-being of Saskatchewan citizens**
4. **Build and broaden Saskatchewan's health research and innovation capacity**
5. **Maximize organizational excellence**

SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH RESEARCH FOUNDATION

# Strategic Plan | 2016-21


Invest in high-impact, peer reviewed health research aligned with provincial needs
Measure and demonstrate the impact of health research in Saskatchewan
Mobilize knowledge for the physical, mental, social and economic well-being of Saskatchewan citizens
Build and broaden Saskatchewan's health research and innovation capacity
Maximize organizational excellence
A vibrant culture of health research and innovation for a stronger Saskatchewan

GOAL

## Invest in high-impact, peer-reviewed health research aligned with provincial needs

### Context and Capacity:

- **A decade of excellence in providing strong, peer-reviewed processes for selecting the best research projects in Saskatchewan**
- **New cyclotron facility for nuclear medicine research, training and clinical services**
- **Advanced medical imaging capabilities, including the Canadian Light Source, Positron Emission Tomography (PET-CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging**
- **One Health initiative bringing together health research in human, animal and environmental health**
- **SPHERU leading in cutting edge population health research**

| INITIATIVES | TIMEFRAME | OUTCOMES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Support collaborative, interdisciplinary research teams, including Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR)-related | Short-Term | Increased understanding and alignment among team members | # of grants, $ awarded, collaborations formed, stakeholder engagement levels, opportunity for application |
| Support the development of the Saskatchewan Support Centre for Patient-Oriented Research (SCPOR) by funding patient-oriented research that includes patients and families as valued members of the research team | Short-Term | Increased understanding and alignment among team members | # of patients and families involved in SHRF-funded research |
| Create reviewer database of SHRF reviewers and develop a training module for reviewers | Mid-Term | Robust network of well-trained, engaged reviewers from a cross section of health communities | Size and composition of database, reviewer feedback and satisfaction survey |
| Form a Research Advisory Committee to inform funding programs and policies (e.g. strategies for involving knowledge users and patients in peer review, processes to ensure proposals contribute to provincial health priorities) | Mid-Term | Increased understanding and alignment, engagement of research community | Engagement levels, research community satisfaction levels, # of knowledge users/ patients involved in the process |
| Review SHRF-funded programs to ensure alignment with provincial needs | Mid-Term | Clarity of alignment, increased impact | $ aligned with needs |
| Develop new funding programs to meet strategic goals in knowledge translation, innovations and capacity building (e.g. proof of principle, bridge funding, clinician scholar and specific calls) | Long-Term | Alignment of programs with needs, opportunities for innovation | # of new programs, flexibility of programs |

GOAL

## Measure and demonstrate the impact of health research in Saskatchewan

### Context and Capacity:

- **National framework for assessment of indicators to measure returns on investment (ROI) in health research through the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences**
- **Expertise in researching and publishing studies on the state of health research in priority areas such as *Weechihitotan 'Let's help and support each other' The Value of Aboriginal Health Research in Saskatchewan***

| INITIATIVES | TIMEFRAME | OUTCOMES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Develop methodology and practice for ongoing ROI studies | Short-Term | Greater accountability and transparency | ROI on SHRF investments |
| Complete impact and ROI studies with research partners (e.g. Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region) | Short-Term | Encourage partner organizations to engage in research by demonstrating ROI | # of studies completed, partner satisfaction levels |
| Raise awareness of the impact of health research (e.g. *Research for Health* magazine, website, newsletter and seniors' health impact study) | Mid-Term | Increased awareness, increased support for SHRF | Readership Survey, use in decision-making, audience reach |
| Improve data collection through annual progress reports and final reports from research teams | Mid-Term | Useful information for decision-making, accountability | Quality of data collected |
| Conduct impact assessment/ROI study on SHRF funding programs | Mid-Term | Accountability and transparency for funds invested in programs | # of studies completed, ROI |
| Complete annual large-scale impact studies on areas of national interest | Long-Term | Advancing knowledge among health system decision-makers, caregivers and the public | Use in decision-making, audience reach |
| Align evaluation and impact assessment of funded researchers with other provincial, national and international funders | Long-Term | Enhanced credibility of evaluations | Use of comparable data |

GOAL

## Mobilize knowledge for the physical, mental, social and economic well-being of Saskatchewan citizens

### Context and Capacity:

- **Demand for collaboration among researchers, care providers and patients through programs such as the Canadian Institute for Health Research's (CIHR) Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research, and SHRF's Collaborative Innovation Development grants**

| INITIATIVES | TIMEFRAME | OUTCOMES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Incorporate knowledge mobilization (i.e. KMb) into program application and review processes | Short-Term | Increased use of research knowledge in practice, innovations | Quality of KMb initiatives, audience reach |
| Develop a media strategy to share knowledge with Saskatchewan residents | Short-Term | Increased availability of research knowledge for Saskatchewan citizens | # of media placements |
| Develop a government relations plan to ensure our government stakeholders are well informed | Short-Term | Enhanced support for SHRF | # of contacts, size of grants |
| Use targeted communication strategies to effectively share knowledge with desired audiences | Mid-Term | Tactics matched to audiences to increase efficiency | Awareness surveys, audience reach |
| Develop knowledge mobilization resources (e.g. tool kits, list of networks for our key stakeholders) | Mid-Term | Greater capacity for knowledge mobilization | Usage of tools |
| Facilitate connections among health sector partners, patients and researchers | Mid-Term | Increased use of research knowledge for improvements to health | # of partnerships, # of connection opportunities |
| Increase opportunities for collaboration across government, institutional, industry and not-for-profit funders | Mid-Term | Increased alignment and understanding, integrated KMb | # of opportunities for collaboration, # of people involved |

GOAL

## Build and broaden Saskatchewan's health research and innovation capacity

### Context and Capacity:

- **Full array of health-related colleges, post-secondary institutions and health regions provides broad pool of expertise and support for health research and innovation**
- **IPHRC builds capacity for community-based Indigenous health research in the province**
- **Academic health sciences complex at the University of Saskatchewan provides unique opportunity for interdisciplinary health research**
- **Initiatives, such as Hacking Health, encourages entrepreneurship in the health sector**

| INITIATIVES | TIMEFRAME | OUTCOMES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ensure SHRF programs support a range of researcher experience and expertise | Short-Term | Greater capacity to meet provincial needs within Saskatchewan research community | Range of researchers supported |
| Quantify cost and lost opportunities of unfunded research and innovations | Short-Term | Opportunity to seek additional funds to support research and innovation | Increased $ for retention, new innovations |
| Expand Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with health regions and other partners | Mid-Term | Expand research capacity in health regions and with other partners | # of MOUs |
| Seek new sources of investment from not-for-profits, foundations, corporations and individuals | Mid-Term | Increased funds for research and innovation | Partnerships, $ new funding |
| Seek funding for a health innovation fund | Long-Term | Expand SHRF's value to include full spectrum of research to application | $ for innovation, commercialization and application |
| Develop a coherent and transparent health innovation investment strategy for SHRF | Long-Term | Expertise for wise decisions, a engagement of committee members | Quality of advisors, wisdom of decisions |
| Work with key stakeholders (e.g. industry and government) to establish health innovation economy | Long-Term | Diversify Saskatchewan economic base | # of jobs and companies |

GOAL

## Maximize organizational excellence

### Context and Capacity:

- **Motivated team with blend of experience and expertise**
- **Solid reputation in research community**
- **Growing national profile**
- **Credible peer-reviewed processes**
- **Sound investment and budget management strategies**

| INITIATIVES | TIMEFRAME | OUTCOMES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Work with key stakeholders, including funders and researchers, to develop appropriate outcome measures | Short-Term | Improved accountability, enhanced ability to demonstrate impact | Development of a dashboard to track progress to goal completion |
| Enhance the financial management function (e.g. assess financial controls and enhance the financial reporting, financial analysis and investment practices) | Short-Term | Improved financial accountability and minimized internal control risks | Effectiveness and completeness of financial controls for all the finance and accounting cycles, improved interest income |
| Conduct baseline study to measure awareness of SHRF and SHRF-funded research among target audiences | Short-Term | Ability to measure the efficacy of future communication efforts | Survey results |
| Revamp SHRF website to improve usability | Short-Term | Increased availability of research knowledge | User satisfaction |
| Enhance the use of technology to enable better communication, collaboration and mobility | Mid-Term | Improved work efficiencies and reduced costs | Cost savings, time savings |
| Revamp SHRF's records management system | Mid-Term | Improved accountability and access to information | Staff time saved, ease and quality of data accessed |
| Develop customer relationship management system (e.g. expand Research Management System (RMS) or other) | Long-Term | Ability to capture information on SHRF's interactions with its customers and stakeholders (e.g. grant holders, reviewers, donors and board members) | Gained efficiencies in managing SHRF's relationships, quality of data, use in decision-making, segmentation |

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